

solution from the extraction portion 18. If the shapes of the injection portion 17 and the extraction portion 18 are the same, the shapes of the caps 21 and 22 are the same as well. It is convenient to make the caps the same in shape because this eliminates the need to manage the caps according to injection and extraction.

[0073] In the following description, it shall be deemed that the shapes of the injection portion 17 and the extraction portion 18 are the same and the shapes of the caps 21 and 22 are the same, and only the shapes of the injection portion 17 and the cap 21 shall be described.

[0074] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of the shape of the cap 21 that covers the injection portion 17. The cap 21 is formed of a resin, such as polytetrafluoroethylene, etc., and is arranged from a knob portion 21a for holding with a hand, a side surface portion 21b contacting the inner side surface 17a of the cylindrical tube of the injection portion 17 or the inner side surface 18a of the cylindrical tube of the extraction portion 18, and a bottom surface portion 21c. A hypothetical cross section of the side surface portion 21b resulting from sectioning perpendicularly along a centerline of the cap 21 is indicated by "S." The cap 21 is formed so that the area of the cross section S decreases gradually along a direction of insertion from the knob portion 21a to the bottom surface portion 21c. On the other hand, the inner side surface 17a of the injection portion 17 is formed so as to increase in cross-sectional area with distance from the injection port 15.

[0075] Specifically, the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21 is tapered in a sectional side view. An angle of inclination formed by the side surface 21b and the centerline is represented by " $\theta$ ." The inner side surface 17a of the injection portion 17 is also inclined at a fixed inclination angle with respect to the centerline in a sectional side view. This "fixed inclination angle" is also equal to the angle  $\theta$  of the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21.

[0076] A method of using the sample cell container C shall now be described using FIG. 7. In a state where the caps 21 and 22 are removed, a predetermined amount of the sample solution is injected from the injection portion 17 using a micropipette 23. The predetermined amount is marked on the micropipette 23 and by injecting the predetermined amount, a state is reached where the internal space 11 is filled with the sample solution and portions of the interiors of the cylindrical tubes of the injection portion 17 and the extraction portion 18 are also filled with the sample solution.

[0077] When a large amount of the sample solution that exceeds the predetermined amount is placed in the micropipette 23, the sample solution overflows from the injection portion 17 or the extraction portion 18 or a state close thereto is reached and the sample solution is wastefully lost when the caps 21 and 22 are mounted. Therefore by adhering to the predetermined amount of the micropipette 23, sample injection of a fixed amount is made possible and wasting of the injected sample amount can be eliminated.

[0078] As the caps 21 and 22 are pushed in, excess solution overflows from the injection portion 17 and the extraction portion 18 because the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21 is tapered at the angle equal to the inclination angle of the inner side surface 17a of the cylindrical tube of the injection portion 17 and the side surface portion 22b of the cap 22 is tapered at the angle equal to the inclination angle of the inner side surface 18a of the cylindrical tube of the extraction portion 18.

[0079] If the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21 is not tapered, that is, if the cap 21 is formed so that the area of the cross section S of the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21 is uniform from the knob portion 21a toward the bottom surface portion 21c and the inner side surface 17a of the cylindrical tube of the injection portion 17 is also formed to be uniform in cross-sectional area, air becomes retained between the bottom surface portion 21c of the cap 21 and the water surface of the sample solution as the cap 21 is pushed into the injection portion 17. The same applies when the cap 22 is pushed into the injection portion 18. The retained air is entrained in the sample solution as the pressure of the sample solution in the internal space 11 increases and bubbles are thereby formed readily. Once bubbles form, the bubbles become attached to the inner wall surfaces of the internal space 11 and become difficult to remove.

[0080] With the preferred embodiment of the present invention, by making the side surface portion 21b of the cap 21 and the inner side surface 17a of the cylindrical tube of the injection portion 17 be inclined at equal angles, the retention of air between the bottom surface portion 21c and the water surface of the sample solution during the mounting of the cap 21 can be prevented. Similarly, the retention of air between the bottom surface portion 22c and the water surface of the sample solution during the mounting of the cap 22 can be prevented. Bubbles are thus prevented from becoming mixed in the sample solution and forming of bubbles during sample injection can be suppressed.

[0081] An embodiment is also possible where the cap 21 is arranged to be used exclusively for the injection port, the cap 22 is arranged to be used exclusively for the extraction port, the side surface portion of one of the caps is tapered, the side surface portion of the injection port or the extraction port on which that cap is mounted is also tapered, the side surface portion of the other cap is not tapered, and the side surface portion of the injection port or the extraction port on which that cap is mounted is also not tapered. With this arrangement, the forming of bubbles can be prevented completely at least at the cap that is tapered and the injection port or extraction port on which the tapered cap is mounted.

[0082] Also as shown in FIG. 8, an embodiment is possible where a side surface portion 21'b or a side surface portion 22'b of a cap 21' or 22' is tapered and has a thread groove (male groove) formed thereon, an inclined thread groove (female thread) is formed on the inner side surface of the injection portion or the inner side surface of the extraction portion on which the cap is mounted, and the cap is pushed in while turning. In this case, excess solution overflows from the injection port 19 or the extraction port 20 as the cap 21' or 22' is screwed in. By using the threaded fitting, firm coupling of the cap 21' or 22' with the injection portion or the extraction portion can be realized.

[0083] Although preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described above, embodiments of the present invention are not restricted to those described above. For example, the shape of the embedded electrode 14 is not restricted to that of U-shaped cross section as shown in FIG. 5B and any shape, such as an "S"-shaped cross section, an "I"-shaped cross section, etc., may be adopted. FIG. 9 shows the shape of an embedded electrode 14a arranged to have an "S"-shaped cross section by bending a metal plate twice. Besides the above, various modifications may be applied within the scope of the present invention.